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Chairperson: Ms. Intelmann ..... (Estonia)

Contents

Agenda item 57: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*)

(b) Industrial development cooperation (*continued*)

Agenda item 56: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*)

Agenda item 40: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (*continued*)

Agenda item 52: Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (*continued*)

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06-61100 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 57: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*) (A/61/307)

(a) Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*) (A/61/308)

(b) Industrial development cooperation (*continued*) (A/61/305)

1. **Mr. Le Roux** (South Africa), addressing agenda item 57 (a) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that poverty eradication was currently the most pressing global challenge and a prerequisite for sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries. There should be more comprehensive and simultaneous consideration of such issues as the provision of adequate resources for enterprise development and the adoption of more development-friendly policies in the areas of international trade and monetary and fiscal policies. The Group of 77 and China looked to their more developed partners to take the lead in that regard.

2. The successful observance of the International Year of Microcredit and of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty had raised awareness of the need for ongoing and more concerted action at all levels to achieve progress in eradicating poverty, which had a particularly crippling effect on women and children. The Group planned to submit resolutions with a view to maintaining the momentum generated by those events. It also planned to propose that the General Assembly should proclaim a second United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty (2007-2016) in order to enable the developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other international agreed development goals within the required time frames. Proclamation of a second decade would also be in keeping with the fundamental leadership role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation and global partnerships for development.

3. Turning to agenda item 57 (b), he said that industrialization was essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable development, poverty eradication, the creation of productive employment, income generation and greater social integration, including the integration of women in development. The Group therefore underscored the role of productive capacity-building and industrial development in promoting the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and called upon the wider international community to support efforts to that end.

4. **Mr. Bai** Yongjie (China), referring to agenda item 57 (a), said that, despite the commendable efforts made over the preceding decade, hunger and poverty remained widespread in the developing countries.

5. Since poverty eradication was a long-term challenge, the necessary lessons should be learned from the work carried out during the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and a second decade should be proclaimed in order to maintain the attention of all parties to the importance of achieving practical results, bearing in mind the Millennium Development Goals.

6. Economic development must be at the core of poverty eradication efforts. The international community, and the developed countries in particular, should devote greater attention to the special difficulties faced by developing countries and should fulfil as soon as possible their commitments with respect to financial assistance, technology transfers, debt relief and market access in order to create a favourable external environment for economic growth in the developing countries.

7. Poverty eradication also required comprehensive and integrated policies that were favourable to the poor, including activities focusing on science, education and public health. Economic expansion that disregarded social equity and the welfare of the people only increased the polarization between the rich and the poor and exacerbated the plight of the poor.

8. Furthermore, because poverty eradication was the responsibility of society as a whole, Government departments should form partnerships with the private sector and civil society. Efforts were needed to mobilize additional resources, create innovative mechanisms and promote vigorous measures on behalf of poverty reduction.

9. Although China had achieved remarkable progress in reducing poverty and promoting development as a result of sustained efforts starting in the 1980s, it still faced acute problems such as low per capita income and unbalanced development, which made it very difficult to eradicate poverty. China was striving to ensure that the wealth created by reform and

development was enjoyed by all its people and was confident that its policies would enable it to meet the basic needs of its population as early as possible.

10. China was an active participant in the global effort to eradicate poverty. In May 2005, his Government and the United Nations Development Programme had established the International Poverty Reduction Centre, which advocated innovative approaches to poverty reduction, promoted policy transformation, supported enhanced international exchanges and facilitated South-South cooperation. His country was willing to engage in practical, effective and mutually beneficial cooperation to reduce poverty worldwide.

11. Turning to the question of industrial development cooperation, he expressed support for the work of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in formulating cooperation strategies and assistance programmes tailored to the development priorities and specific situations of countries and regions and its focus on energy efficiency, environmental protection, productivity growth and trade capacity-building. China hoped that UNIDO would further strengthen South-South industrial development cooperation, continue to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), play a more active role in promoting the effective participation of developing countries in the global economy and help those countries benefit more from trade, investment and technological cooperation with one another.

12. **Mr. Mohamad** (Malaysia), addressing agenda item 57 (a), said that the challenges facing the international community at the end of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty remained formidable. He cited statistics demonstrating that point. Nevertheless, some headway had been made in reducing the absolute number of people living in poverty worldwide, owing in large measure to the reduction in the number of poor persons in East and South-East Asia and parts of South Asia.

13. However, the globalization process, which was characterized by greater interdependence among States, reduced policy space for developing countries and increased volatility in the international economic system, had further hindered the efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty. Moreover, despite the link between poverty and terrorism, the struggle against terrorism had reduced the focus on poverty eradication. The Secretary-General's report on the observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (A/61/308) therefore should have reflected the complexity of poverty eradication issues instead of focusing on the link between the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and human rights, important as that link might be.

14. The international community should continue to place poverty eradication at the top of the global agenda and should therefore proclaim a second United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty. Given the universal nature of the United Nations, its extensive country presence and the wealth of its experience, it should play a pivotal role in international efforts to reduce poverty.

15. He cited statistics illustrating the handsome dividends to his country resulting from its policy of export-led economic growth and growth with equity. However, it continued to face major challenges, including abject poverty, especially in more isolated areas. The Government therefore planned to focus on ensuring that a larger proportion of the rural population, especially those in isolated areas, had access to and benefited from poverty eradication programmes. It would also establish development corridors to promote interregional growth.

16. Malaysia faced a rising urbanization rate and recognized that a different set of strategies was required to address the problems of urban poverty. A creative mix of proper town planning, adequate resource allocation for infrastructure and improved public services was needed.

17. The income gap between rural and urban areas continued to widen and his country recognized that concerted efforts, including an emphasis on agricultural development, were needed to achieve income parity. The Government also was endeavouring to increase the share of household income earned by the lower 40 per cent of the population.

18. **Ms. Sahussarungsi** (Thailand) said that developed and developing countries alike must more energetically address the continuing problems of malnutrition, drought and desertification, and the spread of AIDS, all of which contributed to extreme poverty.

19. Trade was the strongest engine of economic growth and development, and her delegation called for the rapid resumption of the Doha Development Round. Fair market access was the key to the pro-development agenda of the Round and was crucial if the developing countries were to generate revenues capable of helping their citizens to emerge from poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Non-tariff barriers such as the imposition of standards that exceeded agreed international standards should therefore be reviewed.

20. Supply-side constraints also must be addressed to ensure sustainable economic growth. Her delegation therefore supported the Aid for Trade Initiative, particularly its technical assistance and capacity-building components, which were designed to enable developing countries to reap the benefits of improved productive capacity. It welcomed the efforts of UNIDO to help those countries increase their share of manufacturing value added as well as its work on the development and application of renewable energy. It also commended UNIDO and other relevant international organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), for their contributions to strengthening the supply capacity of developing countries.

21. Food security was another requirement for poverty eradication and could be achieved if sufficient freshwater resources were available. Access to land, availability of freshwater and secure habitats safe from disasters were also crucial.

22. Thailand had made remarkable progress in meeting most, if not all, of the Millennium Development Goals well in advance of 2015. After providing examples of that progress, she said that a number of challenges remained to be addressed, such as income disparities among regions and groups within the country. Her Government placed considerable emphasis on human development and human security. UNDP had presented its first Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award to Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej for his extraordinary contribution to human development. Moreover, her Government's economic and social development plan focused on pursuing high-quality growth and justice.

23. Thailand shared its experience and best practices with other developing countries in a number of regional and subregional development cooperation frameworks, particularly in areas in which it had expertise, such as agricultural development and public health. Those commitments exemplified her country's continuing strong support for South-South cooperation on poverty alleviation.

24. **Ms. Ferrari** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that poverty remained the greatest challenge to the global community and required sustained action by all concerned parties. Despite a growing world economy and significant advances in medicine and technology, many people in developing countries had failed to reap the potential rewards of globalization, which had benefited only a minority of the world community.

25. Developed and developing countries alike should live up to their commitments in the fight against poverty. Discussions on poverty should therefore include elements such as reform of the international financial system, a durable and comprehensive solution to the external debt problem, significant increases in ODA and market access for developing countries. The suspension of the Doha negotiations was deeply regrettable; they should be resumed as soon as possible.

26. In the Caribbean region, economic growth was insufficient to achieve significant progress in development and poverty eradication. Moreover, the increased frequency of natural disasters had gravely hampered the region's prospects for socio-economic progress. Gender was another important element of the fight against poverty, and CARICOM countries would continue to support the empowerment of women through national and international efforts and introduce measures to enhance the economic opportunities available to women.

27. At the Millennium Summit, the international community had pledged to halve hunger and extreme poverty by 2015. Although that date was drawing near, the targets still seemed remote. The international community's shared objectives required more than a reaffirmation of the importance of the internationally agreed development goals. Achieving a more prosperous global society required that all concerned parties be involved, determined and committed, and that they operate in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

28. **Mr. Zoubi** (Jordan) said that many lower-middle-income countries were ready to move into higher income brackets as a result of prudent economic management and success in enabling the engines of growth. Although a number of indicators demonstrated the potential of those countries, they continued to face poverty and unemployment, they remained vulnerable to external shocks, and debt burdens drained their national budgets of funds needed for infrastructure and development.

29. Lower-middle-income countries required targeted, results-oriented assistance to accelerate growth, lift millions from poverty and hasten the delivery of the fruits of reform to larger segments of their populations. The Group of Eleven Forum had been established by lower-middle-income countries in September 2006 on the sidelines of the General Assembly with a view to building common platforms for growth and development and playing a more pivotal role in promoting global peace and security. Support for the Forum should be considered an international public good that would contribute to achievement of the global goals of development for all. The Forum's final communiqué had been transmitted to the permanent missions to the United Nations and he urged delegations to consider it and forward it to their capitals.

30. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation) said that increased international cooperation for industrial development was one of the key prerequisites for effective eradication of poverty and alleviation of underdevelopment. UNIDO was uniquely able to assist the less developed countries in their efforts to bridge the technological gap and develop their industrial capacity. The Russian Federation was highly appreciative of the role of UNIDO as a global forum and supported the plans to develop its analytical, forecasting, and methodology development functions.

31. His delegation also supported the efforts of UNIDO to respond promptly to countries' changing requirements in the area of industrial development and to make corresponding adjustments in the services it offered. It was in agreement with the thematic priorities of UNIDO at the current stage, in those areas where it had comparative advantages over the rest of the United Nations family: the fight against poverty through productive employment and technology transfer, development of trade and industrial capacities, energy efficiency and environmental protection.

32. The Russian Federation attached particular importance to the cooperation between UNIDO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), primarily in assistance to small and medium-size enterprises, and suggested that UNIDO should have a greater presence in the field, although not at the cost of increasing the burden on its budget.

33. **Mr. Purevjav** (Mongolia) expressed concern that, notwithstanding the political commitments made during the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, no decisive breakthrough had been made in achieving that objective. Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015, had been hampered in many developing countries by significant capacity constraints. Accordingly, continued support from the international community for poverty eradication was urgently needed.

34. Mongolia was fully committed to achieving the Goals by 2015. They had been mainstreamed into the guidelines for the country's economic and social development and individual Goals would be reflected annually in the State budget. A number of quick-impact measures were being implemented, and tax reforms had been introduced, thereby creating a favourable business environment, fostering increased economic growth and generating new jobs. Observance in Mongolia of the International Year of Microcredit in 2005 had demonstrated the importance of partnership at the national level among all stakeholders, including the private sector and financial institutions, in reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in rural areas.

35. Although statistics indicated that Mongolia would achieve most of the Goals by 2015, especially those related to education, health and gender, his country still had to combat poverty aggressively. A genuine partnership among all stakeholders, and effective cooperation with the country's development partners, were therefore essential. He welcomed the considerable support which the United Nations country team in Mongolia was providing to his country for the preparation of its Goals-based comprehensive development strategy and reiterated his country's interest in being one of the pilot countries in which new commitments would be incorporated into the set of targets used to follow up on the Millennium Declaration, in particular the commitment related to

the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all, as proposed by the Secretary-General.

36. In conclusion, he said that Mongolia highly valued its cooperation with UNIDO in that institution's three thematic priority areas and looked forward to the early completion of his country's UNIDO-integrated programme, which was currently under preparation.

37. **Archbishop Celestino Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) noted that the eradication of poverty was rightly recognized as the cornerstone of the comprehensive development agenda of the United Nations. He therefore welcomed the successes reported by the Secretary-General in his reports on the observance of the International Year of Microcredit and the first International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

38. The latter event took its inspiration from a 1987 meeting of 100,000 people in Paris, which had led to the growing international acknowledgement that poverty often stemmed from violation of human rights. While charity and welfare would always be needed to assist the poorest, the new approach that linked human rights and poverty reduction made the latter a legal as well as a moral obligation. The poor had the same rights as everyone else to justice, decent work, adequate food, health and education, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments. However, since the poor were frequently excluded from society, their capacity to secure their rights was limited. The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty could play a significant role in raising general awareness and persuading policymakers to put the eradication of poverty at the heart of legal as well as social agendas.

39. During the past year, the Holy See had organized three international study conferences relevant to those issues: "Women, Development and Peace"; "Microcredit and the Struggle against Poverty"; and "Combating Corruption".

40. Food and water were not luxuries but basic means of life. Three quarters of the world's countries were States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognized the fundamental right of everyone to food, clothing and housing. Nevertheless, and in spite of the sometimes Herculean efforts of agencies such as the World Food Programme, national and international machinery still failed many hundreds of millions of people. Almost a sixth of the world's population went hungry and a child died of hunger every five seconds: that was hardly a record of which humanity could be proud.

41. The right to development, although sometimes contentious, must be implemented using greater resources, even though lack of resources was often cited as an excuse to avoid acknowledgement of that right. The Human Rights Council's Working Group on the Right to Development had recently received the Council's endorsement of its recommendations regarding the realization of the right to development. It was to be hoped that the endorsement would result in progress towards vindication of all the human rights of the poor and eradication of poverty.

42. **Mr. Lwin** (Myanmar) said that the Millennium Declaration clearly expressed countries' determination to bring all-round development to the world community. Some notable progress had been made, but current economic trends and the challenges presented by globalization were creating economic and social disparities that needed to be addressed if developing countries were to meet their Millennium Declaration Goals. The observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October had been a timely reminder that poverty must be reduced and eventually eradicated if the world was to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving by 2015 the number of people whose income was less than one dollar a day.

43. Myanmar had achieved notable success in carrying out its national development programmes, in particular in health, education, infrastructure and agriculture. In its drive to eradicate poverty, it had designated 24 special development zones for equitable and balanced development throughout the country. With an economy based on agriculture, Myanmar gave priority to development projects to boost the agricultural sector, particularly in its border and remote regions.

44. Industrial development was another important element of Myanmar's development strategy. Industrial zones had been established throughout the country, in order to enhance industrial capacity, generate employment opportunities and help improve living standards, while narrowing the development gap between regions.

45. The observance of the International Year of Microcredit, 2005, with its aims of enhancing public understanding of microcredit and microfinance and promoting a pro-poor finance system, was most relevant for the eradication of poverty. Myanmar used microcredit and microfinance to support poverty reduction projects, particularly those aimed at improving the lives of farming communities and increasing agricultural production.

46. **Mr. Khammanichanh** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) observed that a third of the world population was currently surviving on less than one dollar a day, with limited or no access to basic social services, particularly those related to health care and education. Every five minutes, a child died before reaching the age of five. While recognizing some successes by the least developed countries and their development partners in implementing the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (Brussels Programme of Action), many delegations shared a concern over the lack of progress in the implementation of the commitments of the Programme of Action, making it unlikely that the Millennium Development Goals would be achieved.

47. Countries must redouble their concerted efforts to eradicate poverty. The developed countries should fully and promptly honour their commitments on ODA and debt relief, open their markets and increase the transfer of technology. In that regard, he welcomed the recent positive developments in the policies of some developed countries, particularly European Union members, including initiatives to explore innovative sources of financing for development. Also welcome were the support and assistance provided by fellow developing countries to the least developed countries and the landlocked developing countries.

48. As a landlocked least developed country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had spared no effort to translate its commitments into action. The Brussels Programme of Action had been integrated into the country's ten-year socio-economic strategy (2001-2010). In 2003, the Government had launched the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy, which emphasized overall development in the key areas of agriculture and forestry, education, health and socio-economic infrastructure. The recently adopted Sixth Five-Year Socioeconomic Development Plan (2006-2010) constituted a framework for full and effective implementation of all the goals and targets of the Strategy, in pursuit of the overall goal of ceasing to be in the least developed country category by 2020.

49. Over the past five years, the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals had shown relatively steady progress but the Lao People's Democratic Republic had still to face various challenges. In particular, the child and maternal mortality rate remained high compared to some other countries in the region, while HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as malaria continued to pose a serious threat. Those challenges were compounded by other constraints such as low human resource capacity, inadequate resources and reliance on ODA to finance development programmes. Furthermore, other difficulties such as inefficient and inadequate infrastructure made the Lao People's Democratic Republic unattractive to foreign investment. Much remained to be done by the country to fulfil its ultimate national development goals, which would require greater financial and technical assistance from the international community.

50. **Mr. Manor** (Israel), explained that the MASHAV Centre for International Cooperation, which was part of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed to share the expertise and technologies which had assisted Israel on its own path to development. Since its inception in 1958, MASHAV had worked in over 140 countries, contributing to the eradication of poverty and alleviation of human distress, providing training on socio-economic issues both in Israel and abroad.

51. In 1961, MASHAV had established the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center to specialize in gender issues and women in development. Based on an awareness that impoverished women lacked access to the power and financial resources that would give them effective management of their daily lives, many of the Center's training activities were aimed at eradicating poverty through promoting the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Through the use of role models and best practices and by building professional networks among business women, the Center promoted a more gender-sensitive culture of entrepreneurship.

52. As microcredit programmes had successfully contributed to lifting people out of poverty, training activities for poverty eradication were regularly offered by the Center. Specific activities to mark the United Nations Year of Microcredit in 2005 had included

workshops in Israel on microcredit for hundreds of participants from Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, while in 2006, a workshop on Microcredit and Support Systems for Women had been organized at the Center under the aegis of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. Microcredit undoubtedly played a major role in many donor organizations' gender and development strategies, because of its importance in the eradication of extreme poverty. Recently, the linkage between microcredit and poverty eradication had gained legitimacy through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Muhammed Yunus and the Grameen Bank.

53. **Mr. Bodini** (San Marino) observed that, while San Marino currently enjoyed one of the highest standards of living in Europe, that had been not true 40 or 50 years ago, when its nationals had had to migrate to other countries to find work. San Marino, therefore, was very sensitive to the issue of poverty. Its Parliament had gladly embraced 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and had called on the Government to refuse all forms of social injustice and search for appropriate solutions through dialogue among nations.

54. Poverty was not only a sign of unequal distribution of opportunities but also a violation of human rights. In fact, the rights to freedom, housing, social security and education, or the rights to vote and take part in the conduct of public affairs, were virtually impossible to realize in conditions of poverty. The Secretary-General's report on the centrality of employment to poverty eradication (A/60/314) rightly emphasized that employment was the missing link in the growth and poverty reduction equation.

55. In the developing countries, unemployment was a crucial issue. Even if young people there found jobs, they received low wages and were not provided with adequate social protection. However, the lack of decent work was also a problem in the developed world, where the persistence of temporary contracts with low pay, little or no social protection, minimal training and no voice at work made it clear that having a job was not the same as having a decent job. Indeed the unrest occurring in some European countries provided evidence that poverty was a serious problem also in the North, creating social exclusion, loss of dignity, anger and tension which, if not dealt with, could generate uncontrolled violence.

56. The response should be guided by the human rights approach, which demanded attention to the process of development as much as to its results. Poverty reduction should be measured using a broader set of indicators. A country's economic growth was not the only indicator of progress, since in many developed and newly industrialized countries there were large groups of people who were extremely poor, while certain minorities became even richer. Therefore, access to education and to social security should become integral tools of poverty eradication.

57. Another even harsher problem was the gender-biased aspect of poverty: women's economic activities remained highly concentrated in poor-quality, low-wage, and low-productivity jobs. In addition, women accounted for a large percentage of informal employment, with limited access to job security and even fewer social benefits.

58. Poverty eradication was not a matter of charity but of moral obligation for the United Nations, the Member States and civil society. It would require constructive engagement, continuous monitoring and international cooperation, together with the participation of the poor themselves.

59. **Mr. Wagle** (Nepal) said that Nepal viewed poverty as a multidimensional problem encompassing economic, social and human aspects, which thus required an integrated approach applied locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. The Secretary-General's report had appropriately discussed the linkages between poverty and human rights. Nepal shared the view that poverty eradication was a common obligation, rather than an act of charity.

60. The first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and the observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty had provided an opportunity for sharing best practices and lessons learned, promoting collaboration among stakeholders and urging Governments and the international community to concentrate on the needs-based and long-term policy priorities.

61. Eradication of poverty was the sole objective of Nepal's current development plan, which had incorporated the Millennium Development Goals into its strategic framework. The country was committed to implementing plans and programmes to attain the Millennium Development Goals by improving Government performance and engaging all

stakeholders in the effort. Priority was given to making economic programmes pro-poor and inclusive.

62. Agriculture, the mainstay of the country's economy, suffered from low productivity and a lack of market orientation. Development of rural infrastructure and modernization of agriculture would be crucial to improving the situation of the rural poor. Therefore, the Government had focused its investment on improving the welfare of marginal farmers and developing the commercial aspects of agriculture.

63. Nepal was on track for achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals, including halving extreme poverty and hunger. Poverty had been reduced from 42 per cent in 1996 to 31 per cent in 2004. However, it would not be possible to attain the Millennium Development Goals by following a business-as-usual pattern of investment. Vigorous national efforts and enhanced international support would be vital. A recent needs assessment had projected a total resource gap of $7.9 billion over the coming 10 years. Based on the current level of international resource mobilization, financial support from development partners would have to double to fill that gap. Nepal urged the international community to give greater support to its efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

64. The observance of the International Year of Microcredit, 2005, had created public awareness of the importance of microfinance, local entrepreneurship and local efforts. At a time when the lack of resources had hindered the process of national development, microfinance had become a positive tool for the rural population to accelerate its collective development efforts.

65. Despite collective will and efforts, the improvement in the condition of the people living in extreme poverty in many least developed countries was far from satisfactory. Poverty, hunger, and disease continued to cripple the lives of the world's poor, who continued to struggle for their daily basic needs. Eradication of poverty thus continued to be the greatest challenge to humanity.

66. **Mr. Saad** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that poverty was a form of marginalization, an affront to human dignity and a direct threat to the social, economic and political rights of the individual. The economic and social marginalization that it caused was directly related to political and democratic marginalization. Despite the efforts of the international community, poverty levels had even increased in some least developed countries in recent years, owing to severe economic crises, natural disasters, disease and the vulnerability of their economies.

67. The process of globalization was regarded by some as an easy solution to poverty, but had in fact benefited only wealthy countries. It had widened the gap between rich and poor countries, increased the economic dependence of poor countries and limited their development potential. Foreign debt remained a heavy burden which drained the resources of many States, exacerbated their economic situation and encouraged emigration. Because of the unjust and discriminatory international trade system, developing countries and least developed countries had no influence on international trade and were unable to find markets for their products because of the protectionist regimes adopted by rich countries, notably in the agricultural sector.

68. In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the international community must assume its responsibilities towards developing countries by enhancing development programmes and implementing economic reforms, focusing on agricultural production. It must also develop sanitation and education systems and encourage the import of necessary medicines at reasonable prices in order to tackle the problem of endemic diseases in developing countries.

69. It was not impossible to secure a significant reduction in poverty if the necessary political will existed and if the decisions of the relevant United Nations conferences and summits were implemented in a coordinated manner. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had launched a project for young people and women in Africa and was helping to finance South-South social protection programmes. It was producing drugs and vaccines to help cure endemic diseases in Africa and working with sub-Saharan countries to implement agricultural projects. Its discussions with the leaders of other African countries on agriculture and water supply had led to recommendations aimed at helping those countries to increase their agricultural production. It had also helped establish and fund international financial institutions concerned with sub-Saharan Africa with a view to financing public and private sector production projects in those countries.

70. **Mr. Karageorgiades** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that poverty was the negation of development and that actions to combat malnutrition and improve health services and housing helped to eradicate poverty, particularly if such actions were taken on the basis of solidarity. For more than 900 years, the eradication of poverty and the principle of solidarity had been central to the activities of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which was active in more than 120 countries in the medical, social and humanitarian fields. The Order worked in close partnership with Member States, United Nations specialized agencies, and local and international non-governmental organizations. The fact that a large number of Member States recognized its neutral and non-political status allowed it to carry out humanitarian operations in circumstances in which other organizations could intervene only with difficulty. The Order was convinced that it could continue to play an important role in the areas of humanitarian assistance and development, and was always ready to learn about the initiatives of the United Nations and to improve its own efforts to further human development.

Agenda item 56: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*) (A/61/486)

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/61/82-E/2006/74, E/2006/74/Corr.1, A/61/162, A/61/173, A/61/173/Corr.1, A/61/323 and A/61/117)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*) (A/61/302, A/61/126 and A/61/181)

71. **Mr. Owoaje** (Nigeria) said that the Brussels Programme of Action remained an essential framework for cooperating with and advancing the goals of the least developed countries. The recent midterm comprehensive review of the Programme's implementation had therefore been very timely, and the participation by Member States and other members of the international community had been indicative of the shared desire to improve the socio-economic circumstances of the least developed countries.

72. Although the reports before the Committee reflected modest progress with respect to macroeconomic indicators, governance, human and institutional reforms, infrastructure development and efforts to address environmental challenges, that progress had not been enjoyed by all the least developed countries. The main problem was the failure of the development partners to back their expressions of support with the necessary resources and policies in the areas of debt, trade and investment, notably by taking specific steps to further the objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action.

73. Nigeria welcomed the Secretary-General's continued support for South-South cooperation as a mechanism for addressing the development challenges of the least developed countries. Over the years, Nigeria had pursued its assistance programme to Africa's least developed countries through bilateral, subregional and regional mechanisms. Through its technical assistance cooperation programme it had stepped up its support for capacity-building in areas such as medicine, law, nursing and teaching, and had also cooperated with its neighbours under the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Niger River Basin Authority. Furthermore, within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) it was coordinating efforts in the areas of energy, communications and roads.

74. Nigeria urged the development partners quickly to address the special needs of the least developed countries. In particular, targeted action should be taken to increase significantly the volume and quality of ODA, enhance capacity-building and step up support for rural and agriculture development. Such action should be complemented by genuine reform of world trade, aimed at enhancing the access of commodities from the least developed countries to the world market, and by action to address their heavy debt burden. Lastly, the international community must show greater political will and commitment to the goals and objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action.

75. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) said that the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (A/61/302) provided a useful overview of global efforts to meet the special needs of landlocked developing countries. The report

clearly showed that the economic performance of those countries remained weak, and that their macroeconomic indicators reflected the impact of geographical factors. The international community should continue to support them in their efforts to integrate into the world economy, focusing assistance efforts on export diversification, institutional capacity-building and enhanced market access.

76. Effective transit transport cooperation required continuous review of the efficiency of transit operations. In that regard, her delegation welcomed the efforts of the United Nations regional commissions to strengthen international legislation aimed at facilitating and developing transport. International support measures were key to the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA), and issues relating to trade facilitation and enhanced market access remained key to the landlocked and developing countries, which called for urgent resumption of the Doha negotiations.

77. The Government of Azerbaijan had taken a number of measures to implement the APoA, with support from the World Bank and other donor agencies. Significant work had been done in the field of border-points construction and improvement of logistics and infrastructure within entities responsible for State border crossings. Infrastructure development and maintenance remained a top priority, and a number of important projects had been implemented to improve regional road and rail links. In particular, speedy completion of the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway project was of paramount importance to Azerbaijan, which also hoped to complete the restructuring of the Baku Maritime Station by the end of 2006. Azerbaijan had also completed the reconstruction of Nakhchivan airport, which was of vital importance to that region because it was separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by the territory of Armenia.

78. Lastly, her delegation wished to stress the importance of the forthcoming review of the Almaty Programme of Action, and called on the United Nations system to support the preparatory efforts of Governments to undertake a comprehensive review of progress.

79. **Mr. Chem** (Cambodia) said that the collective resolve of the developing partners and the least developed countries remained crucial to efforts to overcome the world's formidable development challenges. Continued peace and stability were essential to sustainable development. In 2005, the Cambodian Government had adopted a national strategic development plan for guiding development efforts and poverty-reduction strategies over the next five years. In order to boost the country's economy and enhance its global competitiveness, the Government continued to give priority to the development of human and institutional capacities, the removal of procedural and institutional bottlenecks and the promotion of regional and subregional cooperation. As a result of its efforts, Cambodia was on the way to achieving the goal of halving poverty by 2015.

80. People in least developed countries still faced insurmountable challenges, with 1.3 billion people living on less than $1 a day and another 1.8 billion living on less than $2 a day. All the commitments made at international conferences and summits must therefore be implemented in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. Those commitments concerned market access, agricultural subsidies in developed countries and the sharing of knowledge and technological know-how. Cambodia welcomed the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, but continued to urge developed countries to honour their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of GDP to ODA for developing countries by 2015 and 0.215 to 0.25 per cent to the least developed countries. The international community must act together, as quickly as possible. Development could not be sustainable if the inequality gap continued to widen at such a rapid pace.

81. **Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan) said that his delegation supported the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report (A/61/302) that regional economic integration efforts and subregional and bilateral transit and cooperation agreements played a critical role in establishing efficient transit transport systems. It also shared the view that the role of regional and subregional organizations in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the APoA at the regional and subregional levels should be further strengthened. That process would also be greatly facilitated by enhancing cooperation between the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, on the one hand, and regional and subregional organizations, on the other.

82. Kazakhstan fully supported the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of those landlocked developing countries that were emerging from conflict. It welcomed Afghanistan's decision to establish a trade and transport facilitation committee to simplify and harmonize border-crossing procedures and increase the efficiency of transit operations. Afghanistan's participation in regional economic projects and programmes would be beneficial to all countries in the region of Greater Central Asia. His delegation commended the activities of the United Nations regional commissions to support trade facilitation, accession to the World Trade Organization and border-crossing facilitation for the landlocked developing countries in the region. Kazakhstan attached great importance, in particular, to the implementation of the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway Network and the Trans-Asian Railway Network developed within the framework of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

83. Effective dialogue among the business communities of landlocked developing countries, transit countries, external business communities and international financial and regional organizations in the implementation of the APoA was of crucial importance. Kazakhstan continued to take concrete measures to implement the APoA. It was also working to establish a union of Central Asian States, since regional integration was necessary for the successful development of all countries in the region. It was important to implement the Almaty Programme of Action in a timely and effective manner and to take into account the interests of landlocked developing countries in the development of transit transport, the promotion of trade and efforts to gain access to world markets.

Agenda item 40: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (*continued*) (A/C.2/61/L.13/Rev.1)

Draft resolution on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

84. **The Chairperson** informed the Committee that draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.13/Rev.1 had no programme budget implications.

85. **Mr. Edrees** (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution, said that Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wished to have their names added to the list of sponsors.

86. The following revisions had been made to A/C.2/61/L.13: in the ninth preambular paragraph, the word "grave" had been deleted; in the tenth preambular paragraph, the phrase "and the razing of agricultural fields" had been deleted; and in the thirteenth preambular paragraph, the phrase "as it is depriving the Palestinian people of their natural resources and gravely affecting their economic and social conditions" had been revised to read "and of its grave effect on the natural resources and economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people".

87. The introduction of the draft resolution coincided with a new massacre perpetrated against the Palestinian people and the United Nations had a responsibility to end their suffering and the Israeli occupation. He looked forward therefore to receiving strong support for the draft resolution from Member States.

88. **Mr. Manor** (Israel), in a general statement, emphasized that Israel had a vested interest in improving the state of the Palestinian economy for the benefit of both sides. Just a few years earlier, successful Israeli-Palestinian economic cooperation had led to employment for over 150,000 Palestinians in Israel whose incomes had constituted a significant share of the total income for the Palestinian labour force. Unfortunately, the one-sided resolution before the Committee would not contribute in any way to creating a climate of stability and security that would advance economic cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians; nor would it contribute to the peace process in the region or alleviate the conditions on the ground. Playing with words would not improve the standard of living of the Palestinian population. All forms of cooperation needed goodwill and mutual trust on both sides. Nothing could be achieved by alienating one party, and consequently the one-sided draft resolution would yield no results. Adopting another anti-Israeli resolution would not give an ounce of comfort to the suffering Palestinian population.

89. The draft resolution totally and deliberately ignored the main cause of the grave situation of the Palestinian economy, namely, the terrorist activities perpetrated by the Hamas Government. Its policies of

terror and hatred prevented cooperation in many fields, including the economy. Improvement of the economic conditions in the Palestinian territories could be achieved only if the basic conditions for peace prevailed there. As long as the Hamas Government continued its policy of terror against Israeli citizens and ignored the three benchmarks established by the international community — renouncing violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements signed — no economic cooperation could occur.

90. The economic situation in the Palestinian territory was not the outcome of a natural disaster but a man-made catastrophe. Hamas had repeatedly declared its commitment to the well-being of the Palestinian people and in early 2006 had become officially responsible for them. That organization was behind the terrorist attacks against Israel and thus was fully responsible for the lack of economic cooperation with the Palestinian population and the deterioration of their economic situation.

91. No operative paragraph in the draft resolution would bring the parties any closer to changing the prevailing economic conditions. The only operative action required was the complete cessation of terrorist activity against Israel and the resumption of peace negotiations in good faith. Israel would vote against the draft resolution and called upon all those who truly wished to contribute to the peace process in the region to reject it as well.

92. **Ms. Interiano** (El Salvador), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution on the basis of universally recognized principles and in particular the right of the Palestinian people to control their natural resources. However, the draft resolution should have been more balanced in order to promote dialogue between the two sides, end the violence between them and achieve a peaceful resolution that recognized the right of both parties to live within secure, internationally recognized borders.

93. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.13/Rev.1.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Nauru, Uganda.

94. *Draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.13/Rev.1 was adopted by 141 votes to 6, with 6 abstentions.**

95. **Mr. Huimasalo** (Finland), speaking in explanation of vote after the voting on behalf of the

* The delegation of Brunei Darussalam subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the countries concerned had voted in favour of the draft resolution in the belief that the natural resources of any territory seized by force of arms should not be used inappropriately or illegally by the occupying Power.

96. The European Union reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories. However, the issues referred to in the draft resolution should be dealt with in the framework of the permanent status negotiations of the Middle East Peace Process. The European Union remained committed — in cooperation with its partners in the Quartet and in the Arab world — to assisting the parties to achieve a final settlement to the Middle East conflict. The resolution just adopted must not therefore be considered prejudicial to or pre-emptive of the outcome of those negotiations.

97. The position of the European Union regarding the separation barrier and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained unchanged.

98. **Mr. Mally** (United States of America) said that his delegation had long supported the humanitarian needs and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. President Bush had clearly articulated that the objective of the United States was two sovereign democratic States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace and security. Through its failure to renounce terror, recognize Israel and respect previous agreements, the Palestinian Authority Government was creating hardships for its people and postponing possibilities for reinvigorating the road map and progress towards the two-State goal. President Abbas, by contrast, remained committed to those principles and his peace platform.

99. The United States had not been able to support the draft resolution just adopted because it improperly involved the General Assembly in issues that must be resolved by the parties themselves in permanent status negotiations. The language of the draft resolution was one-sided and unbalanced, placing demands on one party to the conflict without recognizing the obligations of the other parties. The role of the United Nations, as a member of the Quartet, should be to support the two parties to the conflict. Resolutions like the one at hand undermined the credibility of the United Nations, which must be seen as an honest broker in the conflict. The Second Committee should not be used to advance one-sided and unbalanced views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

100. **Mr. Normandin** (Canada) was concerned about humanitarian conditions in the Palestinian territories and said that protection of and the right to natural resources were critical to the social and economic viability of any future Palestinian State. Nevertheless, the draft resolution did not advance the search for a lasting solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict, and Canada had therefore decided to abstain in the vote.

101. His delegation reiterated its reservations about the reference to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Any reference to that opinion should unequivocally reflect its non-binding status and should not selectively quote from it without a balancing reference to Israel's security concerns.

102. Finally, he reiterated his delegation's position on the terms "character" and "status", which were synonymous. The term "character" had no known legal meaning under international humanitarian law, including customary international law.

103. **Mr. Al-Ghanim** (Kuwait) asked which delegation had requested a recorded vote on draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.13/Rev.1.

104. **The Chairperson** said that the recorded vote had been requested by the United States of America.

105. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine), making a general statement, said that lone voices had attempted to derail the action by arguing that the topic and draft resolution were one-sided and unbalanced. Since 1972, the Second Committee had repeatedly adopted draft resolutions affirming the Palestinian people's permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and calling on Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its violations.

106. Unfortunately, Israel had disregarded those draft resolutions and had intensified its abuse of those natural resources. Israel's actions on the ground — such as its continuous aggression against the Palestinian people and use of massive, indiscriminate

force — only obstructed efforts to reach peace. The latest incident had been a massacre in which 20 Palestinian civilians, including 11 children and 8 women, had been killed. Such actions also included illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territories, the building of settlements in the West Bank and the continued construction of the wall in utter disregard of international law and the international community.

107. The remarks made by the representative of Israel were offensive and unacceptable. The accusation that the draft resolution was irrelevant flouted the will of the international community, which had repeatedly tried to uphold international law and the principles championed by the United Nations. If the draft resolution was to be considered irrelevant to the principles of the United Nations and the obligations of its Member States, he wondered what then was relevant.

108. The accusation reflected the bankruptcy of the accuser, which had run out of justifications for continuing to snub the international community and the laws it observed. The United Nations was for all its Member States, and the resolutions adopted by them were relevant because they represented their will. Resolutions could not be tailored to the preferences of a minority that had chosen to remove itself from the international consensus that the United Nations, its resolutions and international laws were indeed relevant.

109. By adopting the draft resolution, the international community had reiterated its commitment to international law and the rights it established. The vote also demonstrated the determination of the international community to hold all States to the same standards and responsibilities, demonstrating that no Member State was above international law.

Agenda item 52: Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (*continued*) (A/C.2/61/L.5 and L.34)

Draft resolution on follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development

110. **The Chairperson**, drawing attention to draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.34, said that it had no programme budget implications.

111. **Ms. Pliner** (Secretary of the Committee) noted that the word "Vice-Chairman" in the heading of the draft resolution should be changed to "Rapporteur".

112. **Ms. Gomes** (Portugal), Rapporteur, introducing draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.34, stated that the contents were self-explanatory. She noted that ", Qatar," should be added after the word "Doha" in paragraph 1.

113. *Draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.34, as orally revised, was adopted.*

114. *Draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.5 was withdrawn.*

115. **Mr. Al-Kuwari** (Qatar) said that full cooperation and participation by developing countries and other partners was needed to attain the Millennium Development Goals, especially for the least developed countries and countries with special needs. He hoped that the Follow-up Conference, an initiative launched by the Crown Prince of Qatar, would give a further impetus to development efforts and help to maintain the Monterrey Consensus.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.